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LESLIE NORRIS

The Bowl of Roses

(for Robert Gittings)

CARRYING the bowl of roses to my room
I feel its weight upon my hands and eyes,
While from its liquid hollow each straight bloom
Forms from itself a poise of butterflies,
A weightless galaxy, a dove, a pattern of love,
The stiff, dark leaves below, the incredible head above.

Five minutes since these grew in the summer border,
And I picked them, envying their perfection.
For while the ground is mine and mine the order
In which they grow, they keep their firm creation
Inviolate. I try to catch this secret, to possess,
To make these roses symbolise my own poetic grace.

A despairing motive. Yet we can only try
To feed our roots with whatever comes our way,
With what is captured by heart, ear and eye,
With some sweet act that makes a sliding day
Amazing. So I have cut these roses from the tree,
Hoping to graft, not loveliness, but making, into me.

The incandescent flower, the word aflame,
The sap firing the vein, the exploding blood
In miracles of roses, this wind that came
Into my room upon the perfume's flood!
Within my heart, where thorns and nettles were,
I grow a rose, to shine there like a star.

EDGAR FOXALL

Two Songs

I

ONCE in my days of fiery youth,
I heard the old men say:
Today's truth's not tomorrow's truth,
So rattle and rage away.

Once in my days of heady song,
I heard the old men say:
What you hold now you won't hold long,
So prattle and preen away.

Now that the old men seem so near,
And I've not much to say,
I wish I'd learned to use the spear
That kept their ghosts at bay.

II

Bright is the circling song
That once the Sirens sang,
That round the round earth low and strong
Wove centuries among.

We hear and are compelled
By breasts imagined
To suckle still the song that swelled
From their intolerable bed.

From thighs unseen but known
To fingers sweating still,
The song burns black the holy brown
Of Calvary's scorched hill.

Bright is that circling lay
In every born man's blood,
In every shape that lusts the day
From girl to widowhood.

MATTHEW SIMPSON

Tossa de Mar: Spain

THE technicolour travelogue comes true ;
Colours flashed upon a screen,
Thought only possible with chemical or dyes
Blaze real and warm in living sun.

Colour photographs of Tossa cannot lie :
On the curve of a bay, its houses stand
Small and white, a row of pearly teeth
That grin inanely at the sea.

Green and orange tiles absorb the sun,
Smooth and clean as icing ; surrounding hills
Are clogged with cork-trees, melon-green ;
The sky and sea are Van Gogh blue.

Fishing-boats doze cradled on the beach,
On sun-bleached sand ; nets are straggled
Over walls, and clothes hang drying in the heat.

Fisherfolk are simple hosts with welcomes there :
It is an Eden to dream-wishing eyes.

Cute as hawks, they haul in shekels in their nets
When pleasure boats bump in :
They sell a dream of Eden which is yours ;
You fill their nets : it's paradise all round.

EWART MILNE

For Eartha a Line

I'M a fan of yours, of course.

You ring the changes for me with your voice,
And with your body, too. You really zing.
Oh, yes, yes, you can prance, dance and sing—
Bring this customer in till his cash register stalls.
Besides you've got a way of guying the hit tunes
Pleasing to those who fancy their satirical bent.

You're sophisticated, witty, and elegant,
Elemental and so sensuous it's a mystery
You're still unmarried. Or is it? They say—
The old cliché—you're an intellectual, too. It could be
true.

There's also a rumour that you're 'armoured against
poetry'?

Or at least so you were reported to have said,
And *for* the record. Well, that's sophisticated.

But come now: armoured against poetry? In iron or lead?
As well say you're armoured against being dead—
Or is that unfair? Either way I'd like to know
Just how one grows an anti-poetry armour, and when it's
grown

If you can ever take it off, even by main force, again?
Or isn't it like the belt worn by the Crusader's wife,
Where he who held the key held her chaste for life—

Or for himself, rather. But if no poet however bold
May unlock you and lift you from your shell
Might not life itself die, or become the hell
It's reputed to be, and too often is, too all-embracingly?
But there! Not to be sombre or over-darkling I hasten to
add

I would as poet unloosen your armour, if I could,
Seeing I'm your devoted fan, as already stated.

But while I admire Eartha dancing, Eartha singing,
Most of all I admire that deepdown Eartha,
She who identifies herself with her own people,
bitterly,
Gathers their pain and weariness to herself, so angry often
That she'd storm the whole northern skies to make a
southern heaven.
And I admire Eartha who ran from cotton field to a
star
Because she was Thursday's child, and the way was
far.

ROBERT CONQUEST

Montreux

THE waters curve before our eyes
The blue brightness of a knife,
A seed in a nightmare sleep
To organise
The individual life
Towards a crystal
As clear as this lake and as deep.
Its frigid lens may concentrate
All images under the sky
That the eye or the heart can hold
Focussed to fate;
Soft cloud and swaying tree
Enter the eternal
In a mineral, mountainous cold.
And though no images can freeze
Into unwavering sculpture
The living or even the dead,
Such clarities
Burn the heart and the moment pure
As its mirrors make marble
What the rainbow bleeds, or has bled.

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

Coalmine

A COALMINE is an etching the steel bites
Deep on a pewter sky. Over the pit
A black sun turns, the wheel a skeleton:
Helios, and girders, ladders, struts:
Weave coarse black lace of iron over the sky.
Like men in trains, insular, apathetic
The rows of houses staring face to face
Reflect the whey-blue sky in their bleak windows.
Slag heaps point like the conical Tuscan hills.
And a whippet, yellow as a wireworm, races
through the clinkers.
Flat as the tang of tarnished metal, the smell
Of the mine clings here, the tide of it, in blackness
Flows over the country. Yet calm as the teams
that pull
Great waggons, scarlet and blue, heaped high with corn,
Pit ponies graze and blink, their felted flanks
Dusty with the thin, strained yellow light.
But, as the dark halo of suffering marks out
Those whom time and pain have worn away,
These patient beasts, grazing the blackened grass
Have darkness still around them, and the smell
Of the mine like death to haunt the tainted field.

ADRIAN SANDEMAN

Tact

NO, not a word: silence as usual solves
Problems demanding immediate and verbal attention
But larger than life and that, short of Divine intervention,
Can never be helped. It appears that the answer involves

Pity for others as well as our suffering selves,
For those in the throes of beginning or pending their
ending,

For those who are senile or mad beyond human be-
friending

Or crushed in the labour of life or shelved on its shelves.

And silence concerning the truth is, as ever, the only
Course for goodwill to adopt, and conventional phrases
To mask and envelop the heart in a tissue of lies.

The strictest taboos are attached to the adjective 'lonely'
But smiling inanely and praising what everyone praises
We kid one another there's heaven and nobody dies.

R. L. COOK

North Sea Herring Drifter—Midnight

THOUGH still we hear the dreary story
Of nations crumbling as they make and pass,
Trailing their brittle wreaths of glory
On history's blind looking-glass;

Yet here, tonight, it's man who matters,
The individual, drenched in brine,
Who reaps a harvest where the waters
Are shining as the heavens shine.

JOHN BARRON MAYS

Once at Wycoller

THE place we found was not what we expected.

All day we'd gone in search of a green valley,
River and fields in symbiotic balance,
Buildings and churches cut from grey escarpment
And limestone-chapped and cheeked by ancient beech-
woods.

The place we found was altogether different.
Sunk in a reeking glen and almost lost,
Reached by a sunless track that left the highway
And wound by briar-choked hedge and mossy byeways
A mile or so before swiftly debouching
Into a village street that was—Wycoller!

It was a place half in, half out of time,
A puddleduck Beatrix Potter land gone wrong ;
A place indeed where anything might happen ;
Garbage in corners, pigs walking the street,
A great old sow with red and sloppy buttocks,
Her nine grey piglets squealing at her heels,
And one, the wilful and delinquent, snuffling
In gateways half a cricket pitch behind them.

And by the stream a wrecked and ruined manor
That had all Jane Eyre in its smoke-stained rafters.
And the old packhorse bridge, almost a thousand
Years it had strid the stream, where in your red pants
You baulked the roughneck humour of the heifers
And arms aloft drove them like a slim cowboy
Over the bridge while I cowered limp behind you . . .

Vividly now the details flood before me ;
The place, its age and air-decaying tudor—
The intimate beasts and that sly probing farmer
Who took you for my daughter or pretended !

Everything there seemed to have been inverted ;
Time limped and lagged some centuries behind us,
Or we had strayed by chance in Merry England
And liked it after we had grown accustomed
To earthy smells and jacobean humour.

What we call dirt is largely prejudice.

FRANCES BELLERBY

At Last

REMEMBERING that gesture of the proud sun
Casting his bloodstained cloak upon the sea
Helps you forget
The incongruous death.

Forgetting the fall upon the passive sword
Alone in the troubled mountains of the sky
And time's question
Answered by eternity

Out of true turn, helps you recall
Only forgiveness and the daring to refuse
Guilt though a god
Guiltless should die.

Recalling forgiveness pacifies the whole
Memory in darkness where the soul
Is free to choose
The invisible sea
And voyage at last confidently,
Nothing to win or lose.

PAUL BENTLEY

To a Stillborn Twin Brother

BORN dead, they said. But as a stillborn child
Who never had the chance to live to die,
How could you then be dead? Did only I
Know you had never been as you alone
And could but be as I (or I as you),
An only child yet not a child alone?

You sacrificed, that I should weave our lives
As one. But, knowing as we do, would you
Again so choose that we as I might live,
And could I bear the part you never played
So you in turn could take your place as me—
An only child yet not a child alone?

EDWIN BROCK

A Circus of Regrets

THE man who cracks a whip at dawn
And jumps a dog in a paper hoop
Has learned the secret I have sworn
To suffer from my daily truth;

But whips have cracked and dawns have broken,
And dogs have limped alone to die,
And every word that I have spoken
Has echoed lie and lie and lie.

The man who drags a doll to life
And dances it by hands and string
Has taken magic for a wife
And magnified his suffering,

But love's inert upon its needle
And cannot dance a lullaby
Where nursery songs rehearse to wheedle
Cataracts from a camel's eye.

The days that devastated childhood
Still overshadow every word
With dogs and dolls which move as I would
Move into a conjuring world ;

For magic is put off with reason,
And eyes grow sharp as they grow dim
And faith in love is faith in treason
And hope dries out on age's limb.

BRIAN PARVIN

Walk after Dark

IF only by movement
Words could last
And here, darkness
Hiding what must pass,
Design them growing
Through each step,
Words would find
The nightly depth.

We might then edge,
An island pair,
From this shore out
And further spare
The words of hoping
Being lost,
And silent feel
Our shadows stop.

LOUIS NEWMAN

The Earth just Hangs upon a String

AND so we chose our own design
to dwell upon the stars and learn
the earth just hangs upon a string.
Poor Muse—what happens to you now?
Now without a god to reach so soon
the shore-line of the moon.
What awaits your eyes as heaven
opens up your private skies?
And who will cut the string when
coming down the earth so green,
so green, to sing the old familiar tunes?
U.S.A.

ELIZABETH BARTLETT

Reply to Critics

tell them who scorn my ways
I lived without their praise
and will until I die

let them be cynical
I have my own faith still
to question and deny

the proud and stiff of neck
the small who grub and peck
both look too low or high

while I but seek to know
the feel of things that grow
and by my living why

U.S.A.

DEREK STANFORD

Chava

On looking into an album of the pioneer, Eadweard
Muybridge: *The Human Figure in Motion*, begun
in 1872 and completed in 1885.

SKIPPING and leaping in their dozens come
these naked, smiling, dead-and-buried shes—
pages of pure long-hand anatomy
by this one tireless man bequeathed to us.

Out of that moral fug what April breath
visited Muybridge in his studio?
What muse with scientific wit impelled
him to his art with the result we know:
“An electro-photographic investigation”
into “consecutive phases of muscular action”?

Yet, save the title, all is ease and charm.
Girls and young women point their legs and prance,
climb stairs, and balance jars, link lively arms,
fling high their bonnets in the summer air.

Theirs is no fallen world, this world of hair,
Loose on the shoulders like a ruffled mane.
The swallow and the violet are their signs,
though shyness—if it could be shown to them—
would seem uncomeliness, a mark of shame
not to be looked at.

Do not view these forms,
these nymphs uncovered to the bush of sex,
as teasers, succubi, or figurines
for dark arenas, quick light-fingered queans,
but man's first playmate, still his last though lost.

GILLIAN MILLS

I Am Nonentity

I AM nonentity, composed of nothingness:
I am the empty sum of all life's noughts:
That longed-for missing quality; and nothing less
Than best of all fine disregarded thoughts.
Though humble, insignificant, ignored,
My scope is infinite, my value high;
The root of calculation; every word
Is cast in pools of silence. There am I.

I leap ahead of progress. I am chance
Who waits until discoveries are made.
Each faltering step through basic ignorance
Is my fulfilment. I am proud, repaid.

The flower, root, and pivot of the whole.
I am nonentity. I am the soul.

VERNON SCANNELL

The Masks of Love

WE did not understand that it was there,
The love we hungered for; it even seemed
Love's enemies, indifference, distaste
And cruelty informed our father's stare
Of pained reproof, the homiletic tongue,
The sudden rage and mother's graven face;
But we were wrong.
And when the chalk-faced master showed his teeth
And pickled us in hurtful verbiage
We labelled him Misanthropos and swore
That his vocation was revenge. But this
Was not the truth.

And later when the easy woman gave
Free scholarship to study at the warm
College of her flesh we called her coarse,
Promiscuous and cunning to behave
With subsequent incontinent remorse.
We thought that we were lucky to evade
Her plot to eat us up alive but we
Were just about as wrong as we could be.
As afterwards we were when our sweet dove
Whom we had welcomed to the marriage cote
Became a beaky squawker and appeared
To loathe the bargain that her instincts bought,
And we did not permit her to reveal
The tender fingers in the iron glove
Like that, whose knuckled stratagems conceal
A desperate and brooding love.

JEAN KENWARD

Wet Night

SORROW invades the quiet brain.
Men, thick as wool, float up the hill:
Baggy with mist like an old sow
The sluttish evening swills the lane.

I swig her breath and feel again
That dank caress, marshmallow-chill,
Her gawky thews, her lips; and now
The feeble lashing of the rain.

A bird responsive as a bell
Rings out. Orion strings his bow
And I am gone: into what hell
Or paradise they only know—
Who lay with Leda long ago
Delighting, and they cannot tell.

HAROLD WITT

Lawn

SPENDTHRIFT mornings, jewelled by a dew—
emerald, sapphire, ruby all at once,
diamond webs, and amber-beaded glance
of birds so black they, flashing, sheen to blue—
an ordinariness of lawn enchants.

Then what was opulent evaporates ;
by ten o'clock a greenness squares the view
between cement monotonies of grey,
but, leisure elbow in the busy blades,
lean and learn there more than meets the eye.

A universe by spider laces space
in dandelion, dichondra and clover ;
dramatic underneath, lady and lover
meet for their fatal, sixteen-legged embrace
while armies of ants advance against each other

and deeper under, in translucent bags,
(tomorrow's hope), neat blind choirs sleep.
A rooted carpet, populous and steep,
a roof for gophers, a sweetness for the bees,
this green and trimmed tradition that we keep

cut at rims, clipped against the critics,
where robins hop, where butterflies careen,
looks, by our dainty doors, serene—
but O the raging change and energies within
green infinities where Whitman leaned.

U.S.A.

REVIEWS

The Triumph of the Muse: John Heath-Stubbs (O.U.P., 12s. 6d.).
Poets in South Africa: edited by Roy Macnab (Miller, Capetown).
 10/6.

The Guinness Book of Poetry: (Putnam, 10s. 6d.).

THE pleasure to be derived from reading and savouring the urbane and mannered poems of Mr. Heath-Stubbs is related to that granted more relevantly by minor poets of the 17th and 18th centuries: the teasing Procrustean tidiness of Drummond of Hawthornden, the assured allusiveness of Browne of Tavistock, the topical, casual, serio-whimsical, irritated placidity of Swift in his minor works are all repeated here with a contemporary glint and the blameless conceit of having pulled it off. These are the poems of a friend to friends, occasional and conversational, to which the rest of us may eavesdrop without any feeling of either intrusion or necessity. Classical metres, translations, regular constructions and forms well-handled with facility and amusement, show wide reading and sympathies mixed among the acerbities of a studied man.

Roy Macnab has gathered a collection of poems written either in South Africa or by poets with some connection with that part of the world: the title is so far misleading that many of the poets are not in South Africa at all. Roy Campbell is dead (the book is dedicated to his memory); William Plomer and Charles Madge (the latter represented by four poems published here more than twenty years ago) and possibly F. T. Prince have now more cogency as English poets than South Africans; and others such as Ruth Miller, R. N. Currey and David Wright have already made a name in this country. There is plenty of good material here, readers unfamiliar with South African work being likely to be most interested in translations from the Zulu of B. W. Vilakazi (englished by A. C. Jordan and J. Dexter Taylor), from the Xhosa of J. J. R. Jolobe and S. E. K. Mqhayi and others, and the many excellent pieces descriptive of, or commenting on, aspects of truly African life and customs, and even that more up-to-date scene, in Roy Macnab's words

“... where in mist and myth far up
 The Devil and the Dutchman sup.”

The Guinness collection of well-known names contains five award poems, three Cheltenham Festival prize poems (including one by Paul Dehn whose work first appeared in OUTPOSTS) and fifty-eight other poems (including one by Margaret Stanley-Wrench which itself was first published in OUTPOSTS). For a reader new

to the poets of today this volume provides a useful starting-place; for those already versed it appears somewhat supererogatory, uneven, and exclusive. Among the welter of established names and members of groups, it is good to find a poem (even if only a translation) by A. S. J. Tessimond, and the vivid vehemence of Christopher Logue impresses by its vigour and contempt and sheer liveliness. Most of the poets appearing here do not require this help and publicity, while those who need it deserve more detailed aid and attention. As for the list of those stout fellows who do not make their bow, they serve to demonstrate the restricted scope of the anthology and to point out that the true flavour is not to be found in the "creamy head" but in what stands below.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL.

New Poems 1957: edited by C. Day Lewis, Kathleen Nott and Thomas Blackburn (Michael Joseph, 15s.).

IN the introduction to the sixth P.E.N. anthology we are told that the P.E.N. has three main objects in sponsoring these annual anthologies—to produce collections of enjoyable poetry, to make verse available in a more permanent form than magazine publication can give, and to encourage unknown or little-known poets of promise. It can be said at once that the 1957 collection achieves two of these objects. Although it contains few poems that are really outstanding (and, after all, the choice was restricted to the output of one year), a high level of craftsmanship has been maintained throughout the volume and a wide range of mood, subject and treatment has been covered. It is an enjoyable collection. One might feel that it could have been even more enjoyable, and certainly more exciting, if the Editors had not been quite so cautious in their anxiety not to lower their standards; but one can hardly quibble about that if the result justifies the principles of selection adopted. Nor would one quibble about it had not the Editors gone out of their way to call attention to the third of the P.E.N. objects by claiming that at least one-fifth of the poets represented come under the "unknown or little-known" heading. As about 51 of the 62 contributors have already published volumes of their own, or have collections in the press, and most of the remainder have frequently appeared in various magazines, one must assume that the Editors do not see much of the poetry published in periodicals, or

that, so far as they are concerned, a poet has to be published a great deal before he escapes from the "unknown or little-known" class. Be that as it may, the few unknowns add a piquant flavour to this anthology. Zofia Ilinska's poem on the first hydrogen bomb victim is very moving in its peculiar way :

"Come closer. Watch the newlyborn disease.
I am Aikichi Kuboyama, stranger.
Aikichi Kuboyama, Japanese.
Small boat. Strong fish. Yellow sea. Very danger.
Nose to the wind. Seasalt. Seasharp. Seaspeck
Of mushroom cloud higher than Fuji. Heat."

Cinquevalli, one of the first poems of Millicent Falk (born 1882) to be published, is one of the best things in the collection :

"Cinquevalli the juggler threw into the air
Objects, varied in form colour size
And weight . . .

Had Cinquevalli failed in his act
He would have lost his reputation as a juggler :
But I have much more at stake.
Should I falter, miss a throw or a catch,
Lose my balance, I should be struck down
Lifeless, inert, a mere target for missiles.
So at all costs I stand,
Feet firmly planted, eyes ever upward
Alert to discern at first sight what comes,
Lest, clumsy, I let fall in fragments a friendship
Or lack the quick courage to clutch
That sharp bright blade the death of a child."

There are no surprises from the established poets. They give what we expect from them. Among the veterans are Edmund Blunden, Richard Church, Robert Graves, Edwin Muir and L. A. G. Strong. Dannie Abse, Norman Nicholson, Patric Dickinson, D. J. Enright and Roy Fuller, have all, in my opinion, written and published better poems during the period. For some obscure reason Stevie Smith is given pride of place with four poems; but with the possible exception of C. Day Lewis, the most outstanding poems in this collection are by the younger poets, Thom Gunn, Philip Larkin, Elizabeth Jennings and Anthony Thwaite. I repeat, an enjoyable collection—perhaps next year's Editors will concentrate upon the

third P.E.N. object and take a few more risks in the hope of finding other poets of the calibre of Millicent Falk and Zofia Ilinska.

JOHN SEYMOUR.

Diptych: Mark Bourne (P. R. Macmillan, Cambridge, 9s. 6d.).

The Stone Angel and the Stone Man: Frances Bellerby (Williams, 10s. 6d.).

The Cathedral: Clive Sansom (Methuen, 10s. 6d.).

The Songs of Orpheus: John W. Most (Guild Press, 5s.).

DRUNK on words as a young Dylan, Mr. Bourne staggers boisterously along the slippery paths of his overloaded imagination, from highway to gutter and back again. His mouthings are frothed out with verbal bubble-gum; but now and again he lets slip a phrase as pulverising in its impact as a blow under the heart. He has in him the authentic fire and the divine passion, for the White Goddess has him in thrall. When he learns to control the flame of his poetry; when he learns that love is greater than lust and that hate should be reserved for things that really matter; when he learns the value of accuracy in the manipulation of his tumbling images; when he learns that there is nothing more revealing of immaturity than his sort of slap-dash versifying; when he has learned all this and more, much more, he will begin to achieve poetic stature on a higher, more exalted level than that attained by his precise, pedantic and pallid contemporaries.

In his present volume, *Holiday Town*, *Half Past Twelve* and *The Pram* are particularly worthy of notice. He is a poet of great promise, one of a breed as frequent and as vociferous as cuckoos in spring. One can only hope that Mr. Bourne is one fledgling destined to reach poetic maturity, though one anticipates with shoulder-shrugging fatalism his routine transfer to other, less exacting fields of literary endeavour.

Miss Bellerby's poetry is quieter, more restrained, immeasurably more profound. Her life over the eight years covered by this volume appears to have been a burden of pain and illness, and only a woman could have transmuted her scourging experiences into such brave and beautiful poetry. Most memorable of her poems are *A Prayer in Spring*, *Between Snowfalls*, *Dying in June* and *The House*, together with the haunting, evocative simplicity of the lines beginning:

"I have forgotten why and I have forgotten where,
But my heart halts still as frost at the footfall
on the stair."

Competent, exact, sinewy in style and immediate in impact, Mr. Sansom's new verse sequence evoking the spirit and history of an English cathedral is nevertheless disappointing. He is writing too consciously for a choral-speaking audience with strictly Christian connections. The spontaneity of his earlier poetry is absent in all but two poems: one a quiet carol, the other a delightful fancy from a weathercock.

It would be cruel to submit Mr. Most's verses to critical scrutiny, however perfunctory. Let it suffice that he has obviously enjoyed them in the making and that they may please devotees of Hellenism.

B. EVAN OWEN.

A Forecast, a Fable: Ruth Fainlight (Outposts Publications, 2s. 6d.).
The Forsaken House: Doris Major (Outposts Publications, 2s. 6d.).
Perchance Towards Grace: A. Ritchie Stewart (Outposts Publications, 2s. 6d.).

ALTHOUGH, like most of the booklets in this series, *A Forecast, A Fable* is a first collection, Miss Fainlight's technique is already mature. She has an excellent sense of organic rhythm and her use of imagery carries each poem along on its own impetus. The poems of natural description, such as *Ultimate Day*, *Ligurian Winter* and *The Storm*, are adequate to the purpose, but they lack the tension of those in which she considers personal relationships, particularly the man-woman relationship. At present her strength lies in her subjectivity, and the only attempt she makes to turn outwards—for even the nature poems express her moods rather than the external landscape—is in the poem on the death of Einstein. Most of the pieces are too short to do more than touch upon the subjects which interest her most, but when she sets out upon really ambitious poems we should see something outstanding. As she concludes the booklet, in *A Fable*,

"... now there is nothing to do but wait
For the transfigured prince, who, changed to a toad,
Must wake and set out from the heart of the forest
Bearing that ring in his mouth which will free them all."

The Forsaken House is well balanced in mood and subject, and Miss Major is equally at ease with nature poems, philosophical poems, and poems about life and death. Where Miss Fainlight turns to the world within herself, Miss Major turns to the natural world outside and watches

“a multitude
Of white wings
And feathered necks
In the strange, transparent
Light of an afternoon . . .”

and listens to the wind in the trees. For her, life is response to and awareness of the colour and scent and movement all around her. Her religious pieces have a confident strength, but she is at her most assured when her imagination seizes upon some incident or character from scripture and re-creates the experience, as in *Emmaus*, *The Javelin* and *Lazarus by the Waterside*.

Whether he tackles such formidable themes as *The Universe* and *The Deity* or celebrates the joys of salmon-fishing, Mr. Ritchie Stewart writes in an idiom which makes an immediate impact upon the reader. He has a forthright manner and sees life largely in terms of white and black, refusing to recognise any shades between. The result is that most of his work has a surface quality but no real depth. In the two poems mentioned above, however, he achieves an irony which may, or may not, have been intended, but which gives an edge to the poems and makes them stand out in what is otherwise an uneven collection.

MARGARET KING.

The Camp Site: Gideon Clark (Outposts Publications, 2s. 6d.).

THIS is the second booklet by Gideon Clark to appear in two OUTPOSTS series, but with one important exception the poems included represent his earlier work and seem to exhibit the sides of his poetic talent. The nature poems are lyrical in impulse, expressing the author's delight in the English country scene. Mr. Clark has an eye for colour, and the quiet rhythm of these poems is remarkably apt for what he has to say. Even in the war poems there is a philosophical acceptance, despite the air of melancholy and nostalgia—

“And come with eyes of longing
And joyful failing breath,
Into the still encampment,
The unsentried lines of Death.”

In the later poem, *Westminster Abbey*, however, an entirely different attitude is revealed; a rebellious bitterness that piles taunt on ridicule, satire upon wit, caricature upon lampoon, sarcasm upon exaggeration, in a language which holds nothing back, until one expects the whole poem to collapse under the weight. The surprising thing is that it doesn't. Its roughness of texture, its forceful style, its expression of strong feeling and its extraordinary savagery (however uncharitable it may appear), add power to Mr. Clark's work. Although I find myself in opposition to practically everything he says in the poem, I would say that *Westminster Abbey* is easily the best poem in the collection.

JOHN SEYMOUR.

NOTICES

POEMS INVITED. Contributions are invited for a well-known national magazine experimenting with poetry for the first time. Lyrical poems (having a direct impact), and light and humorous poems should be sent, together with a stamped addressed envelope, to Howard Sergeant at the OUTPOSTS address. Length not more than 20 lines.

OUTPOSTS PUBLICATIONS. The latest additions to the OUTPOSTS series of booklets are *Before the Storm* by Michael De-la-Noy and *Brief Matchlight* by Arnold Vincent Bowen.

